

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

AUGUST 4, 2015

Proclaiming World Breastfeeding Week in Los Angeles County

Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure an infant's health by reducing the risks of both acute and chronic health conditions for both mothers and babies. Given the documented short- and long-term medical and neurodevelopmental benefits of breastfeeding, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends at least six months of exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for as long as is mutually desired.

California is leading the nation in supporting employed mothers to breastfeed with worksite lactation accommodations and protections. The Affordable Care Act requires health insurance payers to provide quality and effective breastfeeding support, supplies and counseling when mothers need assistance with breastfeeding challenges or return to work or school.

Los Angeles County (County) is leading by example. The County has made a commitment to ensuring that women who want to breastfeed are given the best chance at being successful. As the largest employer in the region, the County has a strong worksite lactation accommodation policy and program that goes beyond the requirements of state law. The County's broad network of community partner clinics and health centers provide enhanced breastfeeding support and high quality prenatal care via the state's Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program. Additionally, Women,

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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
AUGUST 4, 2015
PAGE 2

Infants and Children (WIC) programs, which serve 67% of all infants born in the County, provide high-quality breastfeeding support for mothers and infants.

Hospitals also play a fundamental role in promoting breastfeeding. To increase a mother's chances of exclusively breastfeeding upon discharge, California legislation calls for all birthing facilities to achieve Baby-Friendly™ Hospital Designation, or adopt equivalent policies and practices, by 2025, earned by implementing the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. Twenty-five (43%) of the County's 58 maternity hospitals, including the three directly-operated County hospitals, have achieved Baby-Friendly™ designation to date but efforts must continue to ensure full compliance.

Many California families also benefit from the State's Employment Development Department's Paid Family Leave program, which allows new families to take partial paid leave to bond with their infants. This program was found to double the median duration of breastfeeding, even among low-wage employed mothers. Unfortunately, the County has the lowest awareness of this law throughout the state and work still needs to be done to educate families about the program.

The County must continue its efforts to promote, support, and educate new mothers in their breastfeeding efforts.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim the week of August 1-7, 2015 as "World Breastfeeding Week";
2. Acknowledge the 2015 World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action, World Breastfeeding Week theme, "Let's Make It Work" with the goal of empowering all women, working in both the formal and informal sectors, to adequately combine work with child-rearing, particularly breastfeeding;
3. Encourage all employers in Los Angeles County to adopt workplace lactation accommodation policies in accordance with California Labor Code 1030-33;

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
AUGUST 4, 2015
PAGE 3

4. Encourage all hospitals in Los Angeles County to adopt policies that encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding at birth and throughout early childhood;
5. Encourage all prenatal care providers in Los Angeles County to adopt policies that encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding at birth and throughout early childhood;
6. Promote the important role breastfeeding plays in protecting the health of mothers and their children; and
7. Urge all citizens to support breastfeeding and make informed choices about the care and feeding of their infants.

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